

SUMMER TIME

& YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Summer is often filled with excitement; school is out, the days are longer, vacations begin, pools open, and there's more time to relax, explore new hobbies, and spend time with friends and family. For many young people, summer offers a chance to recharge and enjoy a well-deserved break.

At the same time, summer can bring challenges that aren't always visible. The loss of a daily routine, fewer opportunities to connect with friends and trusted adults, increased screen time, and feelings of boredom or loneliness can all impact mental health. For some, summer may also mean spending more time in environments that feel stressful or unsafe without the daily support and stability that school provides.

Recognizing both the joys and challenges of summer helps us create opportunities to stay connected, active, supported, and mentally healthy all season long.

DID YOU KNOW?

Just 10–30 minutes of midday sunlight several times a week can help your body produce vitamin D.

Spending time in parks, trails, or other natural areas has been linked to lower stress and improved mood.

Getting natural light in the morning helps set your body's internal clock, making it easier to fall asleep at night.

Source: American Psychological Association

POSITIVE IMPACTS OF SUMMER TIME

POSITIVE IMPACTS:

More time to rest and recover

A break from academic demands can reduce stress and burnout, giving young people time to recharge before the next school year.

Time to explore interests

- Try new hobbies
- Volunteer
- Develop creative skills
- Build confidence through new experiences

These activities can strengthen self-esteem and resilience.

More opportunities for physical activity

Regular movement and outdoor play help improve mood, reduce stress, boost confidence, and support overall mental well-being. The CDC recommends at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day for children and teens.

Stronger family and community connections

More quality time with trusted adults and community members helps young people feel supported and connected—one of the strongest protective factors for mental health.

HOW TO BENEFIT:

- Take it slow over the summer, relax and focus on hobbies you enjoy
- Get more sleep than you would during the school year

- Create a Pinterest board, save TikToks and Reels of hobbies you would like to explore
- Commit to exploring a new interest
- Check out a new walking trail/safe hike
- Sign up for a class (like cooking, yoga, biking, dance)

- Morning swims if you have access to a safe body of water
- Evening walks after dinner to wind down
- Some gyms offer discounted summer passes to encourage young people to stay active

- Plan family or 1 on 1 time with a family member throughout the summer
- Schedule weekly family game nights or ice cream runs

CHALLENGES OF SUMMER TIME

CHALLENGES:

Loss of routine and structure

- Irregular sleep schedules
- Increased boredom
- Less motivation
- More screen time

Feeling disconnected from friends

School provides daily opportunities for connection. During summer, fewer social interactions can leave some youth feeling isolated or lonely. Strong social connections are linked to better mental health outcomes.

Less access to trusted adults

Teachers, counselors, coaches, and school staff often serve as important sources of encouragement and support. During summer break, youth may have fewer opportunities to connect with these caring adults.

More unsupervised time

While independence can be positive, extended periods of being home alone may increase boredom, excessive screen time, or unhealthy routines if youth lack access to structured activities or supportive relationships. Supervised out-of-school programs have been shown to support positive social and emotional development.

WAYS TO SUPPORT:

Create a simple routine

- Set alarms to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- Find a summertime hobby (bonus if you can do it with someone!)
- Limit your screen time- free apps can help!

Connection can look different

- Plan free or low-cost hangouts
- Schedule weekly FaceTime catch-ups
- Bonus: Find a job that you and your friend can both work over the summer. Make money with your friends!

Stay Connected

If you have access to school email during the summer, having that open line of appropriate conversation can be a great way to have access to a safe adult to seek resources and support.

Intentional with your time

- Work with your family to create routines that provide a good balance of rest and family time.
- Get a summer job or commit to volunteering within your community.